

THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN.

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A CHAPTER OF PREDICTIONS.

WE are no prophets. We presume not to draw aside the curtain of futurity, and reveal her hidden mysteries. Let not the above title, therefore, create alarm in the minds of our readers. Edward Irving has not enrolled us among the number of his followers, nor are we prepared to sacrifice "the words of truth and soberness" to the romance of a spirit of false prophecy, or the dreams of a disordered imagination. Our *Chapter of Predictions* shall consist of plain statements of events,—which events the past and present aspect of things leads us to regard as highly probable. We will not adopt the oracular style of delivering our sentiments: we hate both its darkness and its decision. The decision which originates in enlightened views, we admire; but the decision of ignorant dogmatism, we loathe. Men will expect us to give a reason for the prophetic opinions which we advance, and cheerfully shall we endeavour to meet their expectations, believing them to be reasonable and just.

The present posture of affairs in Europe and America is striking, and supplies abundant materials for exercising the powers of the political seer. With him we do not mean to make common cause, though his department is not entirely disconnected from our own; but we rather confine ourselves, for the present, to some prospective views of the visible church, which have lately pressed on our attention. The Christian world is divided into numerous sections; each is deserving of notice: and the relative positions and movements of them all should be contemplated with the deepest interest. It is with the desire of tracing, as accurately as possible, some of the coming ecclesiastical changes, that we venture into the field of modified prediction; and it shall be our care to combine conjectural glimpses of futurity with solid present instruction.

I. We predict the total overthrow of Popery, properly so called. It may be said that, in this statement, we are merely reiterating a prophecy of Scripture; and that, therefore, the fulfilment, however speedy and complete, cannot prove in the least creditable to our sagacity. This point we are not prepared to dispute: we care not what degree of credit men may attach to us on account of our predictions. But this we maintain, that the downfall of Popery is discoverable from the past history and present state of the world, had the word of God never levelled a solitary prophetic anathema against that anti-christian system. Had the pencil of inspiration never sketched the features of the "man of sin," we should have recognized them in the church of Rome; and this recognition of itself would have gone far to convince us that "the man of sin" must be destroyed. There is, however, in the case, evidence still more overwhelming. The power of paganism in chaining down the human mind was enormous. The interested wisdom of ages and generations had contributed to perfect it as a system of mental slavery. Its provisions for excluding the light of knowledge were admirably contrived; but when by any means that light gained admission, the glory of paganism was gone for ever. Circumstances might, it is true, lead the undeceived votary to pay the semblance of worship at shrines which he no longer venerated; but the spell was broken—the potent charm had lost its virtue. Now it is a well-ascertained fact, that popery borrowed many of the distinguishing rites of paganism. The pretended successors of Peter engrafted heathenism on Christianity. Popish Rome is much more nearly allied to pagan Rome than many are willing to admit. Hence the amazing similarity witnessed in the prevalence and decay of both systems. Both, like the night-shade, have flourished in darkness: the region and shadow of intellectual death have been to both as the dew upon the tender grass, and the showers that water the earth. Popery, in its main peculiarities, is the spawn of blind superstition: ignorance is its own beloved element—it batters on ignorance; and when you remove ignorance, you remove the nourishment essential to its existence. This state of things has been again and again exemplified in different countries; each country, as it became in any considerable degree enlightened, throwing off the yoke of popery, till the once unlimited power of his Holiness has dwindled into contemptible and wretched impotence. The glory of the reformation has covered some countries, formerly under papal domination; others have been visited with

the blight of infidelity. Of the latter, France affords a memorable spectacle,—infidelity has swallowed up her popery, just as popery had swallowed her Christianity. Popery has never stood, and can never stand, before the light of knowledge. Educate the inhabitants of the most popish country under heaven, and their religious system will lose its hold on their minds. They may become infidels, or they may take up another corrupted form of the Christian religion, but sincere papists they cannot continue to be. Now we know that, at present, knowledge is on the increase; and, therefore, on the supposition that knowledge will steadily advance, we predict the downfall of the Romish system, with as much certainty as if we heard the angel proclaiming, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen!”

An objector may allege that our prediction is false, because, forsooth, Roman Catholic chapels, as they are called, are on the increase. We should feel no difficulty in dispatching a dozen such objections. Roman Catholic chapels are on the increase,—granted. What then? Does that prove that popery is in reality extending its influence? We hold that it does not. Were Ireland studded with Roman Catholic chapels, thick as the stars in the firmament, we would still aver that Ireland is becoming more and more free from the tyranny of popish superstition. What power has he of Rome in Ireland? Much less than he desires, though more than he deserves. What power have the priests? Their power is very considerable; but still unspeakably inferior to what they possessed in a darker, and to them more blessed age. We have, in this illustration, selected Ireland, because we believe it to be the most popish country in the world—more popish than Italy—ay, and Dublin, its capital, more popish than Rome itself: and yet we hesitate not to express our firm conviction that the Romish system is breaking up even in Ireland; and to predict its final overthrow. Here two alternatives present themselves,—infidelity on the one hand, and evangelical religion on the other. For the one or the other of these popery will be exchanged. Should mere enlightenment prevail, without regard to God’s word in its operation on the heart and life, the result will be the transition of popery into infidelity. If, again, education take for its solid basis the Bible, and succeed under the divine blessing in disseminating Christian principle, the penances and indulgences, and all the heathenish trumpery of Rome, will give way to the pure and benign influence of evangelical religion.

II. We predict that the established religions of the British empire, and of her dependencies, will either have to submit to palpable degradation, or undergo some sweeping change, the precise nature of which cannot be, at present, estimated. In England and Ireland, the protestant prelatical system is the established order; in Scotland, presbyterianism; and in Canada, popery. Our government is involved in the guilt, or inconsistency, or whatever else it may be styled, of establishing and maintaining each and all of these antagonist religions. The practical consequences of such indiscriminate unprincipledness are every day standing out in forms more hideous and more alarming; and the nation, at large, is opening its eyes to the train of evils and absurdities which appear to be inseparable from a system of contradictory and unhallowed legislation. When we learn that popery, prelacy, and presbyterianism are all established, we cannot conceal from ourselves that expediency, not principle, is the legislator's guide; and we expect bad results more immediate, or more remote, on which he had not calculated. It is a dictate of common sense, that, whatever may be said about the true religion, no man is guiltless in establishing a religion that is false. He is lending himself, in that case, to work a powerful engine of hell; and whatever palliatives he may apply to his own conscience, if he has a conscience, or however the image of public content or public prosperity may strengthen his *faith* in expediency, the memorial of his guilt is preserved in heaven; and there is a God there to punish. We do not concede that, after all, the system works well, even for the statesman's own purposes—we speak not of the frightful influence exerted on his own mind, when he is busied in establishing mutually destructive forms of faith—we dwell not on the obvious tendency of such employment, to bring him to regard all religion as mere legislative machinery. We go further, and we denounce the results as the corrupt fruit of a corrupt tree. The national mind and the national morals must be damaged by notorious lack of principle in high places: and the lack of principle exhibited in the establishment of opposing religious systems, is recorded in the statute-book of the realm as the statesman's public and deliberate testimony to his own dishonesty. It is not the whisper of malevolence that slanders his character, nor is it the tongue of calumny that proclaims his deep disgrace. He is himself at pains to divulge through the British empire, that he has substituted expediency for principle; that he views all religions, true and false, as standing on the same level; and that, in his political capacity, he cares not a rush for

the truth. This testimony to his own shame he embodies in the legislative records of the kingdom, "that all may see, and fear, and do no more" *honestly*. If this is not at least the legitimate tendency of the dishonesty of statesmen in establishing contradictory systems of religion, we shall despair of ever discovering the tendency of any human action. Now for some of the other results.

Let us take, as an example, the established church in Ireland. What is its present position, and what are its prospects? The situation of the Irish establishment is far indeed from being enviable. Curtailed by the legislature in the number of its bishopricks, crippled in the abundance of its emoluments by the formidable resistance of anti-tithe agitation, borne down by the internal incubus of its own abominable pluralities, it presents a spectacle sufficiently helpless, and warningly indicative of the fruits which it may yet expect to reap from the existing connexion with the state. The wailings of *the Church* in Ireland fill the land. Her organs of communication with the public are replenished with complaints against the government—and against papists, infidels, liberals, dissenters, all of whom she regards as her natural or sworn enemies. At this moment measures are pending before the imperial parliament, which must be considered darkly ominous; and the effect of which time alone can fully develope. But we have not yet stated the worst. The defalcation of ten bishops of the Irish Church, by one legislative enactment, has taught the people that the *church* is the slave of the state. The nation were almost deceived into the belief that the relation between church and state, was a partnership on honourable and independent terms. Both parties were come to be viewed as standing on an equality. That dream is over. The *church* now not only occupies, but the people see her to occupy, the position of the veriest tool of state policy. She is in the hand of the Egyptians; her lords and masters are the honourable the House of Commons, including such men as Mr. O'Connell and his worthy compeers. Will she continue to brook the insults and indignities, which are heaped upon her? We know not. But of this we feel assured, that either her *state* relations must be radically altered, or her degradation will soon be complete. "The church is in danger." We sincerely trust, and hope, that in her hour of need, she will repose more confidence in God and less in man—that she will lean on the arm of Almighty power, and not on the broken reed of worldly policy.

III. We predict the downfall of Unitarianism. Some readers may sagely surmise, that in this we express not a prediction but a wish. We do not deny that the statement embraces what is our wish and our prayer; nevertheless, we shall prove it to be a prediction also. But what is Unitarianism? The question is more easily put than answered. Unitarianism is Arianism or Socinianism, or a mixture of both; or something worse than either. Now in any or all of these acceptations, we predict the downfall of the system. In England, Arianism is nearly extinct; and we are of the opinion that, in our own country, it is rapidly giving way to lower views of Christian doctrine. Socinianism is "the besom of destruction" to Arianism; and is itself an admirable preparation for infidelity. If this statement is questioned, we are prepared to defend it. We have before us some tempting specimens of Unitarian testimony, but we need not their aid in elucidating our prediction. The Unitarian system has within it the elements of its own destruction. It makes no provision for the cardinal wants of fallen man: and therefore fallen man must reject it. Men are sinners,—they need salvation, and Unitarianism has no salvation for them: therefore they must reject it. In the name of our common humanity, we would beg of Unitarians to consider this tremendous defect in their religious system; and not to rob their own souls of the blessings which flow from the atonement of Christ. The apprehension that something more may be necessary to our happiness hereafter, than man is capable of performing, was well expressed by Dr. Adam Smith, in the first edition of his "*Theory of Moral Sentiments*," though the passage was subsequently suppressed, we presume on the suggestion of some infidel friend. Having adverted to man's repentance and humiliation on account of past misconduct, Dr. Smith proceeds to observe,—“He even distrusts the efficacy of all these; and naturally fears lest the wisdom of God should not, like the weakness of man, be prevailed upon to spare the crime by the most importunate lamentations of the criminal. Some other intercession—some other sacrifice—some other atonement—he imagines must be made for him, beyond what he himself is capable of making, before the purity of the divine justice can be reconciled to his manifold offences. The doctrines of revelation coincide, in every respect, with those original anticipations of nature; and as they teach us how little we can depend upon the imperfection of our own virtue, so they show us, at the same time, that the most powerful intercession has been made, and that the most dreadful

atonement has been paid for our manifold transgressions and iniquities."

We offer no apology for presenting our readers with this delightful extract. It is the language of truth, and contains an interesting testimony to the evangelical views of the author. Had he looked into the Bible as a Unitarian, he would have found no *sacrifice*—no *intercession*—no *atonement*. According to the barren system of Arius and Socinus, there is no meaning in the beautiful declaration, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life:" nor can we derive any comfort from that heavenly promise, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."

The religious system which is not, in the nature and extent of its provisions, commensurate with the wants of sinful humanity, may enjoy ephemeral success; but its days are numbered. Were there no Bible to pass sentence of condemnation on it, the necessities of our moral nature, with which it had wantonly trifled, would rush forward to sign its death-warrant, and to be its executioners. "*No sacrifice, no atonement, no intercession!*" men would cry in despair, "Nay, we will not believe it; for God has assured us in his own word, that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

While we confidently predict the extinction of Unitarianism, we are anxious that evangelical truth should occupy its room. We are not actuated in giving expression to this anxiety, by the principle of the papist, who would exclude from salvation all who are not within the venerable precincts of mother church. Our feelings are of a different order, and originate, we trust, in a higher source. It is not the locality of any communion, but the faithful reception of the great doctrines of grace, which we contend for as essential to salvation. These doctrines Unitarians reject, and therefore we believe them to be in a state of condemnation. Are we, then, become their enemies because we tell them the truth? No: we speak the truth in love, and with an affectionate concern for their best interests. D.

THE oil of vain-glory feeds the lamp of many professors. "Come, see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts." The wind of vain-glory hath blown many to hell. Thus the ambitious Hamans and Herods of the earth seek that men should give them divine honour, and take God's glory to themselves; while they would lord it over the consciences of men, and would have themselves obeyed more than God.

—*Ralph Erskine.*

WISDOM AND GOODNESS OF GOD,

ILLUSTRATED IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE LOWER ANIMALS.

To the Editors of the Christian Freeman.

I MIGHT illustrate, by many examples, the benevolent wisdom of God, shining forth in the astonishing approaches which the instinct of the lower animals makes to reason, in accommodating itself to varying situations and circumstances; thus preserving its possessors amid many unforeseen dangers. My object, however, is to illustrate the mingled wisdom and goodness of God, in the provision which he has made in the instinct of the parent for securing the safety of the offspring—in the adaptation of the animal's nature to its mode of procuring subsistence—and in the abundant supply which Providence furnishes for the immensely varied classes of animated being.

The illustrations of the first of these three heads I shall take from the insect tribes.

The opinions, not merely of the vulgar but of philosophers, on the subject of the generation of animals, have been surpassingly absurd. Who has not been gravely told, for example, that a hair kept a sufficient time in the water will be transformed into an eel? Many a man has repeated such nonsense, without being at all aware what a handle he thus gives to atheism. The vulgar are not, however, the only transgressors here. What schoolboy does not recollect the sage receipt furnished by Virgil, in the fourth book of his Georgics, for creating bees? And Kircher, one of the most learned men of the last century but one, assures us that snakes can be manufactured in great numbers, simply by roasting some snakes of whatever species you want, cutting them in small pieces, sowing these in oily earth, and watering them carefully with a watering pot for eight days. Spontaneous generation, on which infidelity has built so many proud and wicked reasonings, is nothing more than a dream of the night of ignorance, of which the full brightness of the light of day leaves not a remnant. Any one, even partially acquainted with the astonishing number of the eggs of insects (not to speak of animalculæ), and the varied provision made for their preservation and dissemination, has little cause truly to fly to the atheistical doctrine of spontaneous generation, for getting rid of his difficulties. The queen of the white ants, for example, lays at the rate of 86,400 eggs in the day, which would be at the rate of

thirty-one millions five hundred and thirty-six thousand in a year; or nearly one-third as many as all the men, women, and children, on the face of the globe. Upwards of a thousand aphides have been counted on a single leaf of the hop; nor need this surprise us, when we know that a single aphis may, during its life, be the parent of five billions, nine hundred and four millions, nine hundred thousand. There is, it is true, tremendous destruction carried on by many enemies among such small animals; but, in their immense numbers, Providence has secured the continuance of the species; while, in these numbers he has furnished ample provision for the wants of other creatures. A similar illustration might be drawn from the case of the frog. That showers of this animal fall from the clouds, has been a favourite theory with many. The great Parent has, however, devised a much more philosophical mode for their procreation. A single frog spawns about thirteen hundred eggs. The great naturalist, Ray, saw once two or three acres nearly covered with frogs. A booby, or a philosopher of the old school, would have at once pronounced this to be the fruit of a frog-shower; but Ray was a philosopher of observation and of facts, and therefore, tracing the frog swarm, which was at the time on its march, he soon came to an immense pond, which, as he was informed, was filled with frogs in spawning time. In fact, we would be constantly under the frog-plague of Egypt, were it not that a good and wise Providence has raised up so many enemies to frogs, and restrained them from propagating their species till they are three years of age.

In the various species of mammalian quadrupeds, a beneficent Providence has wisely prepared, in the suck and affectionate care of the dam, a bountiful and tender provision for the young in the helpless period of youth. But what shall become of the young insect whose parent died so soon as she laid her eggs? Must the helpless orphan open its eyes only to behold its own wretchedness, and perish though surrounded on all sides with plenty? He that is truly a father of the fatherless has remembered it, insignificant and helpless though it be; and, in the instinctive foresight of the parent now dead, he secured for it a rich abundance. The acuteness and skill of female insects in anticipating the wants of their young when the fond mothers themselves are no more, is truly admirable.

The mason wasp for example, after having dug a hole for the reception of her eggs, in the hardest sand, collects into the hole a store of caterpillars, which she fixes together in a spiral

column; so that, though they remain alive, they cannot change their position. These the young grub eats, the exact quantity for his support having been laid in by his careful mother; he then spins a case, and is transformed into a nymph, which afterwards becomes a wasp.

The violet carpenter bee sometimes works incessantly for several weeks together, boring in wood a hole of twelve or fifteen inches long and half an inch broad, perhaps of two or three different departments, for depositing her young. This length she divides into spaces, each about an inch long, with divisions formed in a most wonderful manner of the sawdust cemented, which she has cut out of the hole. At the bottom of each division she deposits an egg, and fills up the space above with pollen (the powder of flowers), for the support of the young grub; and, having thus occupied the whole of the divisions, she makes all secure by closing the entrance. Only a part, however, of the wisdom displayed in this case has been told. It is evident that, since it occupies a considerable time to procure the pollen, and form the division for each section of the hole, the grub produced from the bottom egg would be ready for taking its departure before its brethren in the upper sections. How does the wise mother guard against any evil arising from this? Simply by boring a lateral hole in the wood, by which those coming earliest to maturity may effect their escape without disturbing the younger brood above them.

The tapestry bee, after having made in the earth a hole like a Florence flask, about three inches deep, and hung it round in the most superb style with pieces most scientifically cut from the leaves of the scarlet field poppy, fills the hole with the pollen of flowers mixed with honey, to the height of about half an inch; and then, laying an egg on this, she folds the leaves over it, and fills up the remainder of the hole with earth.

It is not, however, among beautiful or rare species of such animals merely, that we discover wonderful evidences of beneficent wisdom in the great Creator. Those which we are accustomed to consider the most contemptible, furnish a rich store of contemplation for the devotional mind.

The eggs of a common yellow dung fly being furnished at the upper end with two diverging pegs, are thus allowed to sink into the dung a sufficient distance to keep them moist, while they are prevented from being completely immersed. Actual experiment has proved, that this arrangement is absolutely necessary for hatching the eggs; for they cannot be rendered prolific if either raised entirely above, or sunk below the dung.

We would take, however, very imperfect views of the provident foresight of such little animals, did we consider them as only constructing their nests so as to secure a lodging and a sufficiency of food for their progeny, or a safe retreat from the attacks of birds. Against much more subtle and dangerous enemies have they to guard.

All know the plan of the cuckoo, in making use of the nest of another bird for hatching her progeny. The whole tribe of ichneumons act, however, a much more treacherous part.—They actually make a lodgment of their eggs in the bodies of the young of other animals, or in their eggs, which serve as food for the young ichneumon. To effect this object, the ichneumon is furnished with ovipositors (instruments for placing eggs) of the most remarkable kind, frequently so strong as to be able to bore into the nests of other animals, and so long as to reach to the bottom of them, and pierce the poor grub lying there. But the most astonishing circumstance in this case is, that the young ichneumon is directed by an unerring wisdom, not to kill, to the very last, the caterpillar on which it feeds; for thus it would be useless to him for food. He therefore takes special care, while enjoying his luscious repast on the body of the living caterpillar, not to injure any of the vital parts.

The insidious wisdom of these carnivorous insects is met by very remarkable ingenuity on the part of the mothers, whose progeny is exposed to their felonious designs. On the illustration of this I do not enter, as I wish to close the discussion of the first head by stating the remarkable fact, that the common gnat, for the propagation of her species, constructs a boat of her eggs (each of which, if alone, would sink in water), so mechanically and effectively, that the little boat, consisting of two or three hundred eggs glued together, braves all dangers of the boisterous element to which she fearlessly commits it; and which, more strange still, never fills with water, however exposed.

The second thing proposed in my method was to illustrate the beneficent wisdom of God, in the adaptation of the nature of animals to their mode of procuring subsistence. Here the whole world of animated nature lies wide before me, and every department solicits attention, and exhibits its wonders. Shall I turn to the minute, or to the great—to the water, the land, or the air? Shall I examine the mouths, the stomachs, or the shapes of animals—their instruments offensive or defensive? Each sphere has its peculiar wonders of wisdom and goodness, calculated to lift the mind in holy admiration to the

great Fountain of all wisdom and all goodness. In the limits now prescribed to me, I can only select a few examples. Let the first be taken from the minute, and the others from the great.

The ant-lion grub can only walk backwards, and that, too, very slowly; and its food is ants, which are very swift. How then shall its life be preserved? Its Creator has furnished it with a compensating wisdom, and enabled it to effect by stratagem what it could not by force. For seizing its prey, it constructs a pitfall of from one to three inches diameter in loose sand, narrowing downwards in the shape of a funnel; and it lies concealed at the bottom, to lay hold of its victim when it tumbles down. Nothing could be more methodical than its mode of preparing this funnel. Having first carefully examined the nature of the ground, and marked out by a circle the size of its trap, it sets to work by placing, with one of its legs, used as a shovel, a portion of sand on the flat part of its head, and this it jerks right out of the circle. Thus it goes round the circumference, using only the leg near the centre of the circle as a shovel; for the use of the other would spoil the shape of his snare. It is not so unjust, however, as to condemn the one poor leg to bear all the toil; for, so soon as it has gone round the circle, it wheels right about, and going backwards, as usual, in an opposite direction, it shovels away manfully with the other leg. If it meets a small stone in its progress, it jerks it out in the same way as the shovelfulls of sand; but sometimes it meets a big, heavy one, three times perhaps larger and heavier than its own body; and then comes the tug both of ingenuity and strength. For the purpose of dislodging such a stone, it moves calmly towards it, stern foremost of course, and getting its tail under it, it contrives, by dint of hard work, to get it on its back; and away it then goes with it to the top of the pit. If the stone be flat, all goes on well; but if it be round, positively it requires no little management to get it kept on the lion's back, till he gets it to the top of the hill. Many a time it does tumble off, and tumble, too, at the very edge of the pit, when all the toil seemed to be at an end. This, however, so far from discouraging our hero, only stimulates him to fresh exertion; and, with a perseverance and an energy worthy of so noble a cause, he again and again renews his labour, till, at last, it is crowned with success. Having completed his undertaking, and all things being now ready for work, he buries himself in the sand at the bottom of his pitfall, with his jaws alone left exposed; and whenever a few particles of

sand rolling down the funnel give him warning that some unfortunate ant is beginning to lose its sure footing at the top of his trap, he is at once on the alert to fling up a shower of sand for the purpose of securing the descent of his prey.—Here, then, is an animal from which man might learn many a lesson of wisdom. He is naturally incapable, we would be ready to assert, of making any animal his prey; and as it were aggravating the natural helplessness of his condition, he throws himself out of the track of all animals, by fixing his habitation at the bottom of a hole. Who shall feed him there? Shall CHANCE, that nothing which silly man has advanced to the rank of a goddess,—shall she send him food regularly, by directing the footsteps of wandering animals to the edge of his hole? He would be a great fool to lie hungering with his nose out, at the bottom of his hole, till the philosophy of Epicurus, or Spinoza, or Buffon, would send him a supply. He depends upon a rich provider, even upon Him who commanded the ravens to feed his prophet, and from His hand he not only receives each day his daily bread, but receives an abundant supply; for after all it is to be remembered that this same ant-lion is so dainty a fellow that nothing but titbits satisfy him; and, therefore, having sucked the blood and juice out of his prey, he chucks the dry carcase out of his hole.

I have, like yourselves, Messrs. Editors, a mortal antipathy to the phrase "*To be Continued*;" still, however, as my time is at present fairly up, and as it is not an interesting story but a dull disquisition which I am writing, some of your readers may not be sorry to get rid of me for the present by my writing—*To be Continued*.

Yours,

X.

THE TRINITY.—INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

I. *That God exists we may feel as certainly assured as of our own existence, or the existence of surrounding things.* I am conscious that I exist; and I feel certain, therefore, that I am. There was a time when I began to be: and as every thing must have a beginning, and as nothing can make itself, some power must have given me being; and that power is God. We are descended, it is true, from parents; they derived their existence from their parents; and we thus trace back generation preceding generation. But there must have

been a first man. Did that first man make himself? This would imply the contradiction that he acted before he existed—that he was before he was. He who made man, therefore, is God. In deriving our existence from our parents, it is only instrumentally that we do. God is our Father in the highest sense: and in relation to our body and our spirit, though we come into the world in a state of infancy, we are as really the workmanship of the Almighty as Adam was, when he first opened his eyes, in the fulness of perfect manhood, on the virgin beauties of the new-born world. We may feel as certain, therefore, of God's existence as we do of our own.

The universe around us must have had also a beginning and a cause. Who gave it birth? Whose workmanship was it? It could not create itself. There must, therefore, of necessity be an uncreated, self-existent, independent, and eternal JEHOVAH, who created the universe—who upholds it by his power, and pervades it by his presence. "Thou even thou art JEHOVAH ALONE: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee."—Neh. ix. 6.

God is not an object of our bodily senses. No man hath seen him at any time, nor can see him. This, however, is no proof that he does not exist. He is a spirit: but spirit, though not an object of sense, can manifest itself to mind. What, for example, are men around me? They are immortal souls. But I have never seen their souls. And am I, therefore, to conclude that they have none? I see their faces; I hear their voice; I behold their actions; I witness them perform a vast variety of works, which indicate contrivance, design, benevolence. From these acts and operations, I infer the existence of rational spirits, and spirits of a certain moral character. Mind thus becomes, by its operations, an object of knowledge, intercourse, and love to other minds. Now, the motion, and speech, and acts of a man whose soul is invisible, do not more certainly indicate the existence of a mind which animates and directs his bodily movements, than the marks of design and benevolence which pervade every department of creation, from an insect to an angel, from the planetary system to the animal frame, bear witness of an infinitely wise and benevolent mind who gives birth, and consistence, and energy to all things. "For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."

II. *This wonderful and glorious Being transcends our comprehension.* "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" No created intellect—none but his own infinite mind—can fully know God. His name is Wonderful; his greatness is unsearchable; his ways are past finding out: there are "secret things which belong to God," and which remain unrevealed to the children of the dust. We stand upon the shore, and see a part of his ways; but the boundless ocean stretches out before us vast, fathomless, and unknown. In those attributes in which creatures resemble him, as wisdom, benevolence, love; and in those attributes in which no resemblance can possibly exist, such as self-existence, omniscience, omnipresence, independence; there is a height and depth, and length and breadth, which passeth knowledge. We know the *fact* of his existence as certainly as we do our own; but of the *mode* of his existence, we know nothing. In relation to the creature, we know nothing of animal life, but from its operations; what can we then know as to the manner of the subsistence of the infinite Jehovah? He is self-existent, underived, eternal, present every where throughout the universe, every moment in every place giving energy to the whole mechanism of creation: working every moment, and at the same time, in relation to life in all its endless varieties, matter in innumerable forms throughout innumerable worlds, mind in myriads of beings belonging to various orders of created intelligence; sustaining, controuling, governing all things; attentive to the minute, unincumbered by the vast, unbewildered by the various.—These are all *facts*; but the *how* of any one of them, is immeasurably beyond our conceptions. Let any one, for example, endeavour to form a positive conception of what God's creative power is—what his eternity is—what his omnipresence is,—omnipresence by which he is as much here as he is millions of millions of miles away in the remotest fixed star, and as much there as he is here; and he will find his mind sink down overwhelmed with astonishment and wonder. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it."—Psalm cxxxix. 6 There is nothing analogous in the creature—nothing similar in the whole range of our experience—to help our conceptions. Finite cannot comprehend infinite. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." The study of God is like ascending to the sun,—the nearer we should approach that lu-

minary, we should find him widen and expand, and disclose new and growing wonders to our astonished eyes. The sun might be reached at last; but through all eternity, though God shall be for ever studied, he shall remain for ever the unsearchable Jehovah. *Oh, the depths of Deity!* "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

Is God unsearchable? The use that we should make of this fact, in relation to the investigation before us, is to have our minds schooled in such a way as to be prepared for perceiving that it would be most unwise, most unphilosophical, to consider that an aspect of strangeness and mystery in the revealed character of Jehovah, should be admitted as an argument *beforehand*, against the reality of that part of his character, provided that the fact of its being so is substantiated by adequate evidence.

III. *Our knowledge of God is derived from Revelation.* It is common to restrict revelation to the Scriptures, but, strictly speaking, it has a wider application. God created Adam not an infant, but a perfect man, and gave him a direct oral revelation of himself. After the fall, revelations were communicated in diverse manners to Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Job, and others; and they communicated these revelations to their contemporaries. Strictly speaking, the knowledge of God was never left to be inferred by a mere process of intellectual investigation from the works of nature, clearly as God shows himself by them. When the human family was dispersed from Babel, they carried this knowledge along with them: it was spread over the world as men multiplied, and replenished the earth: it was handed down by tradition from generation to generation; and though debased by superstition and idolatry, remains of this traditional revelation are to this day found pervading, like golden particles, the false religions of the heathen world. In point of fact, therefore, there is no such thing as natural religion, existing in a state of separation from revealed religion, whatever speculations ingenious men have wasted on this subject.

There are other ways by which God reveals himself to his creatures. He reveals himself by the works of creation: He reveals himself by the operations of providence: He reveals himself by means of those facts respecting the properties and causes of things, which human experience has discovered throughout successive generations. To all other revelations, God has superadded the revelation of his Inspired Word. None of these revelations can or do contradict each other.

The revelation which God gives in his *Word* and in his *Works* must harmonize. Inspired revelation, however, communicates intelligence of God which could have been learned from no other source. Inspired revelation comes stamped with the authority of God; and it is our duty, and our wisdom, not to theorize and determine *beforehand* what we shall think God ought to be and to do; but, by a diligent collection and comparison of the whole statements which he makes in the Bible concerning himself, ascertain what he truly is, in the various aspects and relations in which he reveals himself to the faith of his children. As it is the only sound philosophy to admit those facts and causes in nature which experiment has proved to be real, however strange they may seem, and however contrary to popular and preconceived opinion; in like manner, it is the only sound theology to receive as so many facts, what the Scriptures reveal concerning God, because these rest on the infallible testimony of inspiration. These facts may appear strange and astonishing: to our limited minds, they may appear attended with difficulties; such as, when we read of God being love, and yet angry with the wicked—merciful, and yet by no means clearing the guilty: but the very circumstance of a supernatural revelation being afforded us on subjects lying far beyond the range of human experience and human discovery, should prepare our minds to expect communications wonderful and mysterious. If difficulty and mystery be a reason for the rejection of a doctrine, then a great part of our most certain scientific knowledge must be exploded. Is it any argument against the existence of ice, because the inhabitants of the burning zone have no experience of frost, and cannot believe that water becomes solid, merely because they have no experience of it? Is it any argument against the astronomical doctrine of the sun being the centre of our planetary system, or of the earth's diurnal motion round its own axis, and its annual revolution round the sun, merely because the one-half of our peasantry cannot believe it, or conceive how it is? Attraction, gravitation, electricity, the vegetation of plants, the generation of animals, the action of spirit on matter, are all *facts*; but *how* these things are, is mysterious. Every science has its inexplicables; and if we are to reject every thing that is attended with difficulties, we shall believe nothing, and plunge into the gulph of universal doubt. With the materialist, we shall reject the existence of spirit: with Hume, we shall deny the existence of the world around us: with the deist, we shall reject the revelation of the Bible. We shall begin to reason

ourselves into the absurdity that our souls are nothing but ideas and sensations: and, on the principle that we are to believe nothing that is difficult or mysterious, to carry out our consistency, we must plunge into atheism, and deny the God who made us. Mark the exploit which our reasoners have accomplished! With the chivalrous resolve to explode all mysteries, they have sallied forth in a spirit of metaphysical quixotism; and they have reasoned matter out of the world, their souls out of their bodies, and God out of his own universe!

Things invisible, spiritual, and heavenly, are the subject of God's revelation in the Bible. These, in the very nature of things, are not objects of sense, but rest for their authority on the testimony of God: and if, in human things, which we have not ourselves seen, we receive the witness of men, surely, in divine things, the witness of God is greater. Nicodemus could not comprehend the doctrine of the new-birth: he staggered at its strangeness: he could not comprehend its possibility: but did this invalidate its reality? Our Lord showed him, that as our ignorance respecting whence the wind comes or whither it goes, does not interfere with our belief of the fact that it blows. In like manner, the new birth of the soul to eternal life, by the Holy Ghost, is a certain fact, though we cannot explain *how* the Spirit operates upon the soul; and our Lord concluded, with putting on record this great lesson, which is of general application to all religious questions—"We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not; how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"

Here we see what is the proper office of reason in matters of religion. It is not to determine *beforehand* what revelation *should* teach, but to ascertain what revelation *has* taught, and to receive the record with thankfulness and docility. This is right reason—this is sound philosophy—this is real Christianity. This is the duty of man; and the duty which God requires of man in relation to revelation as a whole, as well as to each of its details, is obedience to his revealed will. Here we learn what faith is. Faith, is reason receiving the testimony of God. There is no contradiction, but a glorious harmony, between reason and faith. Faith is the most reasonable of all things: faith is the perfection of reason; for what demonstration is there so strong as this, God has said so, and, therefore, it must be true. God only fully knows himself; and what he has revealed of himself by his Spirit in the Scriptures, de-

mands and deserves our faith. As faith, therefore, rests on the infallible testimony of God, instead of being irrational, it is, at once, the *highest wisdom* and the *surest science* of man. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." "We walk by faith, and not by sight."

IV. *God is one.* In opposition to all pretended gods, God asserts his own unity. Man is a depraved being. He had lost the original knowledge of God—he had sunk into polytheism and idolatry. The only true God was the unknown God. To recover man to the knowledge and worship of himself alone—to assert his unity and unrivalled supremacy—was one end for which God gave man the revelation contained in the Scriptures. Mark how he proclaims himself.—"I am God," declares he, "and beside me there is none else." What was the great announcement which he uttered to his chosen Israel? "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah." Which is the first commandment of the law, given forth from amid the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai? "Thou shalt have none other gods before me." What has been the worship of the church of God in every age? "Thou art Jehovah alone: thou hast created all things; and all the host of heaven worshippeth thee." What does the religion of Christianity effect among the nations? The extirpation of idolatry; for it is written, "The idols he will utterly abolish." What is the first message that our missionaries carry to the heathen? "There is none other God but one." All who are converted "turn from idols to the service of the living and true God." The symbolical angel, who flies into the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, proclaims with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to him; and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

On the subject of the divine unity, I offer the following remarks.

1. We are indebted to divine revelation for all existing knowledge in relation to the unity of Jehovah. Man is a fallen being, and "does not like to retain God in his knowledge." He has "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." The history of the ancient nations is a proof of the tendency of mankind to apostatize from the worship of Jehovah into polytheism and idolatry. Even the Israelites, after all the astonishing miracles, and mercies, and judgments which befell them, displayed a disposition no less amazing to lapse into the idolatries of the nations. Absurd and irrational as idolatry is—

the absurdity of absurdities—yet, no people have ever returned from it to the worship of the only living and true God by the mere exercise of their reasoning powers, but only in consequence of revealed religion. Pagan philosophy never turned any community from idolatry. “The world by wisdom knew not God.” There are examples of philosophers conforming to the abominable idolatries of their countrymen—examples of philosophers reasoning themselves by whole sects into atheism; but there is no evidence that any, by the mere force of unaided reason, has ever discovered the oneness of Deity. Reason approves of the doctrine of the divine unity as revealed to us; but we must distinguish between discovering a truth, and approving of it after it has been discovered. Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, and other gentile philosophers, were indebted for the superior light for which they were distinguished, to that traditional knowledge of the true God, which had been largely diffused among the gentile nations, by the Jews of the dispersion, who, from the period of the Babylonish captivity, had been greatly scattered over the earth, and who always carried with them the “Oracles of God.” That we, in common with all flesh, are not at this moment idolaters, but profess to know and worship the one Jehovah, is owing to the Inspired Revelation which he has given us. Thanks be unto God for the unspeakable gift!

2. The Scriptures in asserting the unity of God, always assert it simply, as a fact, in opposition to polytheism. With respect to the divine essence, they give us no disquisitions: they tell us nothing of the *mode* in which Godhead subsists: they define nothing of the nature of Jehovah’s unity: they do no more than declare that God is numerically one, in opposition to a plurality of gods. The first commandment is an example,—“Thou shalt have none other gods before me.” This evidently asserts the divine oneness in a sense opposed to polytheism. We have also another striking example in 1 Cor. viii. 4. Exhorting Christians against idolatrous compliances, the Apostle says, “We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many), but to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” Now, we have here a declaration of oneness: no definition of the nature of oneness, observe; but a declaration of the fact—the fact of numerical oneness in opposition

to the gods many and lords many of the heathen. In this passage, the Father is styled One God, and Jesus Christ is styled One Lord. God and Lord are here clearly synonymous terms. As the Son is not styled one Lord to the exclusion of the Father, in like manner, the Father is not styled one God to the exclusion of the Godhead of the Son. This is evident when we consider that, in quotations from the Old Testament, in which the Son is called Jehovah, the term is translated Lord, in the New. Thomas, in addressing Jesus Christ, said, not *of* him, but *to* him—"My Lord and my God." "The Word was God;" and "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

3. It is unscriptural, and unwarrantable, to put such a construction beforehand on the oneness affirmed of Deity as would exclude the possibility of a distinction subsisting in the unity of Godhead. No one knows anything of the nature of God but from divine revelation. No one is entitled to say that a distinction in the Godhead is impossible or untrue, unless the Bible be silent on the subject, or declare the contrary. The Bible, we shall show, does reveal that distinction. The unity of God, as understood by the *modern Jew*, the Mahometan, the Deist, the Sabellian, the Arian, and the Socinian, is not the real unity of God—it is not in accordance with the nature of God as he reveals himself to be. The term Unitarianism, so eagerly usurped, at present, by Arians and Socinians, ought not to be conceded to them; especially, as it manifestly implies an insinuation which is altogether untrue, that, in asserting the Deity of our Redeemer, and of the Holy Ghost, we make three gods; whereas, our doctrine is, "In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons." Arians and Socinians deny the Deity of the Son and Spirit: they affirm that they are creatures: they do not believe in the one living and true God as he is—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We cannot concede them the designation—Unitarians: and an earnest desire for their good, together with an overwhelming sense of duty to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, constrain us to withstand these men, reasoning with them in meekness out of the Scriptures, if God, peradventure, may give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

4. All true Christians are Unitarians in the right sense of the word. They know, love, obey, worship, and glorify the only true God,—him who is Creator of the world, the Father of spirits, the Redeemer of his church, the sanctifier of souls, the Jehovah of the Bible. There is no contradiction in being

Unitarians and Trinitarians. Christians are Unitarians in the sense that they are witnesses for the oneness of God in opposition to pretended deities. They are Trinitarians,—a term compounded of two words signifying three in one, because they hold that there are three persons in the unity of godhead.

5. All who possess a saving knowledge of God, are taught, not only by the word, but by the Spirit of God. It is the office of the Spirit to cause the word to shine savingly into the heart. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Spiritual discernment is communicated by the Spirit. He guides into all truth according to the Scriptures. He opens the eyes of the understanding. He shows the things of Christ to the soul. Hence he is called the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Hence he is called the Spirit of truth. Hence, even under the comparatively dark dispensation of the Old Testament, "God gave his good Spirit to instruct them."—Neh. ix. 20. And hence the psalmist has taught us to pray, Psalm cxix. 18, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law." The Christian dispensation is called, by way of eminence, the "ministration of the Spirit," not only because the Spirit has given us a fuller revelation of the things of God and of Christ in the New Testament than in the Old, but because to a more enlarged extent now than under the Old Testament dispensation, he opens and enlightens the understandings of his people, in the knowledge of God the Father and Jesus Christ our Saviour.

CEPHAS.

(The remainder in our next.)

FIGURATIVE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SAVIOUR.

WHAT an amazing variety of figurative illustration does the Spirit of God employ in the Scripture, to show us what Christ is to his people! Constantly surrounded as we are by material things, engrossed as we are by objects of sense, the invisible things of Christ and of his salvation, are in danger of being excluded from our minds. From their occupations and circumstances, the great mass of mankind are incapable of close and long-continued intellectual application. Abstract statements and lengthened didactic discussions fail to interest and excite them. Such, moreover, is our fallen condition, that

there is a moral inaptitude and disrelish in our minds for the contemplation of spiritual things. The Spirit of God knows our hearts, and in the Scriptures he addresses us in a way best calculated to awaken, to interest, and instruct us. To creatures in our circumstances what is there so needful to know, as Christ and his salvation? To show us the things of Christ,—to set him before us in all his offices, relations, and blessings—to reveal him to the soul in a manner best adapted to persuade the understanding, and to win our love—the Spirit lays hold of those objects around us with which we are accustomed to associate ideas of excellence, utility, and delight; and employs them in the Scriptures as images to represent and to commend the Saviour's excellence and worth.

Look, for example, at the religious institutions of the Old Testament dispensation. How richly was the Saviour typified by these! Did Moses lift up the serpent in the wilderness, that the Israelites bitten by the fiery serpents, might look to the serpent of brass and live? By the preaching of the gospel, Jesus Christ is lifted up before all the world, as a crucified Saviour; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Were cities of refuge appointed, that the manslayer should fly to them, and be safe from the avenger of blood? Jesus Christ is the Refuge from the wrath to come; and to them that are in him there is no condemnation. Were animal victims constantly slain in daily sacrifice by the proper officiating priest? Jesus Christ unites in himself both priest and sacrifice. By the one offering of himself, he has made an all-sufficient atonement for sin; and he ever appears in the presence of God for us, pleading the infinite merit of his death.

Look at the constitution of civil society. The king, as supreme, presides over all the orders of the state—all the provinces of the empire—all the citizens of the commonwealth: he is the supreme organ of authority, legislation, and government; it is his office to protect the interests, maintain the rights, and seek the good of all. The Lord Jesus is the King of his Church. He gives his people laws—he reigns in their hearts—he unites them together in one—he accepts their obedience—and defends them from their enemies.

The shepherd's occupation is one of the favourite illustrations of Holy Writ. All we, like sheep, have gone astray. But our blessed Redeemer is the good Shepherd; he gave his life for the sheep; he restores our souls, and feeds them with the blessings of salvation.

The healing art presents its illustrative tribute to the Re-

deemer. The souls of men are morally diseased by sin. But Jesus Christ is the Physician of souls. He heals the broken-hearted. He expels the deadly distemper from our nature. He is our life: yea, he is the resurrection and the life; for he gives life to both the body and the soul.

War is compelled to furnish aid to help our conceptions of the Prince of Peace. Some heroic spirit nobly puts himself at the head of his countrymen, and leads them to exterminate from their native land the invading foe. If he fall in the encounter, and purchase his country's liberty with his blood, this endears, in a tenfold degree, his name and memory to the hearts of his countrymen. Jesus Christ is the Captain of our salvation. Our redemption he hath purchased with his own blood. He has laid down his life for us. But he has lifted up his head on high; he is carrying on the great moral conflict; and all his soldiers are assured of a participation in his conquest and triumph.

Come into the church. Jesus Christ is the great teacher—he is the bishop of souls—he is our perpetual sacrifice—our unfailing advocate with the Father—a priest upon his throne, authoritatively governing, protecting, and blessing his people.

Illustrative contributions are levied from the world of nature. Behold the fountain which sends forth yonder plentiful stream, which waters the valley, diffusing verdure and fertility as it flows along, and quenching the thirst of the animals that pasture on its banks. Jesus Christ is the fountain opened; and the influences of his Spirit are the living waters which purify, refresh, and gladden the church of God. Enter your garden. Jesus is the Rose of Sharon; he is the apple tree among the trees of the wood; he is the true vine, and believers are the branches; he is the tree of life in the midst of the church of God. All Christians live in consequence of being united to him; and the blessings of his salvation are the fruit which nourish souls unto everlasting life.

The animal as well as the vegetable kingdom does homage to the Son of God. As the hen gathers her chickens under her wings, he who has warmed the breasts of the inferior creation with the instinct of parental fondness, as well as infused the higher principles of compassion and love into the hearts of angels and of men, fails not to cover his people with the wings of his providential grace. He is the meek and gentle Lamb of God, who bowed his head to suffering and death; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and he will execute judgment at the last upon all his incorrigible enemies.

Enter the domestic circle. See the father's care,—he rises early and sits up late, that he may provide for his family. Look at the mother's tenderness,—she fondles her helpless babe, anticipates its every want, stills its every murmur, is touched with its every cry, holds it to her heart, and warms it at the heat and feeds it at the fountain of her own fond breast. See how husband and wife dwell together as one, having the same interests, and bound by the same love. With more than father's care—with more than mother's tenderness—with more than wedded love—the Lord Jesus loves and cherishes his church.

Let us contemplate the structure of our own frame. The head governs the body. Being the residence of the soul, it actuates the members,—it sees in the eyes, hears in the ears, speaks in the tongue, moves the limbs, and imparts vital energy to the whole. Christ is the head of his church: believers are the members. They live; yet not they, but Christ liveth in them. Every member of his mystical body derives all spiritual wisdom and strength from him. Of his fulness do they all receive. And there is not a Christian but is what he is by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Survey the world of art. Behold yonder stupendous edifice, which swells out in architectural magnificence before the eye. How necessary a firm foundation to support so immense a superstructure! What a foundation is to a building, Jesus Christ is to his church. He is the foundation that God has laid in the purpose and covenant of grace. He sustains the great building of mercy. He is the tried and sure foundation. Built on him, the soul defies the shock of death. On this Rock he builds his church, for an habitation of God through the Spirit; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The sun is the most glorious object in the material universe; and it would be strange, indeed, if the Scriptures did not employ it as a fitting emblem to typify to the minds of men, the mediatorial glories of him who kindled its splendours. What the sun is to the planetary system—the centre of attraction—and the source of light, and warmth, and joy, to this our lower world, Jesus is to the church of redeemed and regenerated men. He is the great moral centre: in him are joined together in one, not only the hearts of believers all over the world, but the alienated families of earth and heaven. From him, as from a fountain of unfailing fulness, the blessings of

light, life, and salvation, stream down upon the apostate children of men. And as from the broad surface of the earth, the eyes of men are upraised to the sun, rejoicing in his beams; in like manner, throughout the church, the souls of all Christians delight to contemplate the Lord Jesus as the sun of righteousness—the light of the world—the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person—the most glorious and attractive of all objects—filling the hearts of his people with admiration, gratitude, and love.

The Holy Spirit has thus consecrated visible and material things to the service of the Redeemer. Scripture constitutes them remembrancers of Christ. The associations which our minds connect with surrounding objects are christianized; a sanctified taste is thus formed; and the book of nature, as well as the book of inspiration, not only testifies of God, and of his perfections and providence, but of Christ and of his salvation.

CEPHAS.

SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION SOCIETIES.

THE following extract is from a Memoir of the Rev. ELIAS CORNELIUS, Secretary to the American Education Society; a very interesting and useful work: lately re-published from the American Edition, under the superintendence of the Rev. William Innes, Edinburgh.

PROVISION for the support of indigent young men in their preparation for the Christian ministry is not a modern invention. Among the public institutions which were established in the universities of Europe, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were the *colleges*, buildings in which students, especially poor ones, might live together under superintendence, without paying for their lodging. In some cases, they also receive their board gratuitously, or had still further allowances. The first and most distinguished of these colleges was at Paris. In German universities, something similar was introduced, called *bursae*, or charitable establishments, in which students could live for a very low rent. Most of the students on these foundations were destined for the church. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge, in England, have had, from the earliest times, classes of students

supported in part by the funds of the colleges, and called *postmasters* and *scholars*, *exhibitioners* and *servitors*. The last named are young men who wait on the others at table, and have board and instruction gratuitously for four years. The fellowships in the English colleges are charitable establishments, intended in part to furnish facilities for the education of indigent young men for the church.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, almost two hundred years ago, an education society was formed in England. Among its patrons and trustees, were Matthew Poole, Richard Baxter, William Bates, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Manton, Ralph Cudworth, and John Stillingfleet, a constellation of names such as rarely has adorned the church of Christ since the apostolic days. The plan of this education society contains the outlines of a system which was well matured, and adapted to efficient and permanent action. In 1648, no less than *forty-four* students were under its patronage in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The reasons for the establishment of this association, Richard Baxter gives with his usual quaint good sense. "1. There is so much difficulty in every good work, even in giving so as to make the best of it, that we should be thankful to those who facilitate it. 2. Great works must have many hands. 3. Conjunction engageth and encourageth, and draws on those in the company that else would lag behind. What need we else associate for our ministerial works of instruction, discipline, &c. and not leave every minister to himself. In company, we go more cheerfully, easily, regularly, and prevalently."

A Baptist education society was formed at Bristol, England, in 1686, by the donation of Mr. Edward Terrill. Previously to 1710, students were placed under the care of different ministers in various places. Five or six years since, this society had assisted in educating one hundred and twenty men for the ministry. Most of the dissenting academies in England are, in a certain sense, education societies. Distinguished families, like those of the Thorntons and Grants, have done nobly in giving and lending money to candidates for the sacred office.

A principal design of the colleges which were first established in this country [America], was to furnish the means, through various charitable foundations, of preparing indigent young men for the Christian ministry. This was a main object of Thomas Hollis in founding the professorship of divinity at Harvard college. The same excellent man also made provision

for an annual bounty of ten pounds sterling "apiece, to several pious young students devoted to the work of the ministry." The preamble to the charter, which was granted to the college of William and Mary, Virginia, by the assembly of the colony, in 1662, has the following language: "The want of able and faithful ministers in this country, deprives us of those great blessings and mercies that always attend on the service of God," &c. In 1698, a number of individuals in the colony of Connecticut, on account of an increasing demand for educated and pious ministers, formed a design of establishing a college. Various advantages have been long enjoyed in the institution which they founded for assisting the class of young men in question. The Presbyterian synod of New-York, desiring to remove the necessity of introducing individuals into the ministry without the necessary intellectual attainments, resolved to take measures to establish a college in New Jersey. Similar motives influenced many of the founders of Williams, Middlebury, and other colleges. In 1807, the theological seminary at Andover was founded. Important pecuniary assistance, in many ways, has been furnished by the patrons of this institution, in preparing young men to become preachers of the gospel. The same remark is applicable to the Princetown, Auburn, and other theological seminaries. In 1807, an education society was formed in the vicinity of Dorset, Vermont; and in 1813, an association for a similar object in the southern counties of Massachusetts. The last named adopted the principle of *lending* money to young men, without interest. In 1814, the Massachusetts Baptist education society was formed.

In the summer of 1815, a few individuals in Boston, having become convinced of the necessity of a great increase of the number of well-qualified ministers of the gospel, determined to make an immediate and general effort for the accomplishment of their purpose. A meeting was accordingly held in the last week in July, at which the subject was fully discussed. On the 29th of August, a constitution was reported and adopted. The society was not, however, organized till the 7th of December. William Phillips, lieutenant-governor of the State, was chosen president. On the 4th of March, 1816, four young men were admitted to the patronage of the society.

The causes which led to the establishment of this institution were various. The close of the war with Great Britain furnished good men a favourable opportunity for calm inquiry into the religious condition of the country, and for devising

comprehensive plans for its benefit. The increase of theological seminaries naturally suggested to their patrons and trustees, the necessity of adopting measures for augmenting the number of theological students. Those who looked abroad upon the unevangelized nations, were sensible that an extraordinary demand would be made for missionaries and missionary agents. The general spirit of the age was also highly auspicious in respect to the formation of such an institution. In addition to the general philanthropy which was awakened, and the power of *associated* effort, which was put forth, it became apparent to the most intelligent Christians, that a great amount of *educated talent* must be provided; that, otherwise, the incessant demand which would be made for labourers on the outworks of Christianity, would exhaust the internal supplies. The world was not only to be evangelized, but *educated*. Permanent Christian communities were to be formed over all the earth. The united and invincible power of knowledge and holiness were, therefore, to be brought into extensive operation. It would seem, that education societies would form a sort of intellectual magazine, where the constant waste of benevolent energies could be repaired. They would make a kind of *substratum*, in every portion of the country, on which the most sure dependence might be placed.

AN ADDRESS ON BELIEVING.

For the Christian Freeman.

“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”—John ix. 35. What an important question is this! It refers to a vital principle of religion,—faith in the Son of God. Intimately connected with your answer to this question, is your present peace or eternal misery. “For he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

“Hast thou faith?” It is a heavenly principle: and if you believe on the Son of God, the power to believe has been graciously communicated to you. Faith is a self-evidencing principle. If, therefore, you believe on the Son of God, you have the witness in yourselves. Faith is a triumphant principle. If you believe on the Son of God, you have overcome the world, and obtained the victory. Faith is a principle practical in its operations. If, therefore, you believe on the Son of

God, you walk by faith, "adorning the doctrines of God your Saviour in all things."

Do ye, then, believe on the Son of God? The question is of the utmost importance in time, and as regards eternity. He who proposes this question to you is the Lord Jesus; and he is our Sovereign, Saviour, and Judge. The question is general.—It is addressed to all. The question is personal.—It is put to each. It is not, does this man or that man believe on the Son of God? But dost *thou* believe? "Hast *thou* faith?" The question is simple. It requires no tedious process of reasoning to find out the result. For "he that believeth hath the witness in himself." "The Spirit of God beareth witness with our spirit." Dost thou, then, believe on the Son of God? Your answer to this question may be of a doubtful character: for all men have not faith. "Examine yourselves, therefore, whether ye be in the faith." Some there are, I fear, who cannot answer this question in the affirmative. And how shall I address such? In what manner shall I represent your awful state and danger?

Unbelieving sinners, would that I knew how to present Jesus before you in the most attractive form,—in all the loveliness of his character, and the excellence of his salvation! Hear the message of the Lord. Jehovah himself speaks,—
"Come now let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow—though they be red like crimson, they shall be as the wool." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Jesus died—shed his blood "for the remission of sins." "His blood cleanseth from all sin." "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself—not imputing their trespasses to them—and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

The calls, the invitations, and the promises of the gospel; the overtures of mercy, life, and salvation, through Christ, addressed to you in it, are free, full, universal, and particular. In these Jesus speaks; and the Spirit of God invites and entertains you to partake of the benefits and blessings of his salvation. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea come

buy wine and milk without money and without price. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: ye shall find rest to your souls." In the last, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and cried, saying, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." "He that believeth on me," as the Scripture hath said, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." "The Spirit and the Bride say, come, and let him that heareth say, come, and let him that is athirst, come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Will ye not then, O sinners, come to Christ when thus invited, entreated, and called? Will ye not believe on him with all your hearts, that ye may have eternal life? "Him that cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out." "Believe, and ye shall be saved."

I entreat and beseech you, by the tender mercies of the Lord our God, that you "acquaint yourselves with him, and be at peace; and thereby good shall come to you." I beseech you by the death and sufferings of the Lord Jesus, that ye yield yourselves to him. I beseech you by his agonies and cries, that you believe on him with all your hearts for salvation. I beseech you, by his glorious resurrection and ascension, to put your trust in him for immortality. I beseech you by all that is lovely in the Redeemer's life, by all that is meritorious and efficacious in his atoning sacrifice, that you be not faithless but believing; and let your faith express itself in the words of adoring Thomas, when he said unto Jesus, "My Lord and my God!"

J. M.—.

THE DYING ROBBER.

By a Clergyman of the Church of England.

DURING the awful visitation of that contagion which swept thousands to the grave, a clergyman of the Church of England, after a day spent in ministering the support and comfort of the gospel to many a sick and dying soul, had retired early, fatigued and exhausted, to his bed, hoping to enjoy for a few hours the repose which he much needed. He had spent some time in prayer for a blessing on the word which he had dispensed that day, and committed his own soul and body into the keeping of Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps. He lay for some time, but could not sleep; the scenes he had witnessed that day, the countenances of the dying, some racked

with agonizing pain, and some in the livid deathlike torpor of the collapsed state, seemed still before him, and a nervous feverishness from this excitement banished sleep from his eyelids. "Oh!" thought he, "that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound of the gospel; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; and when they pass through the valley of the shadow of death, they will fear no evil, for thou art with them—thy rod and thy staff they comfort them:" and he shuddered at the fearful contrast which that day had presented to him, in the case of too many. The clock struck twelve, and he had just fallen into a slumber, when a knock at the hall door aroused him. He heard it opened, and in a few minutes his servant entered the room. "Sir, there is a man below who says he must speak with you." "Ask him his name and business." "He says, sir, he must speak to yourself." Mr. T—— rose, dressed himself in haste, and, taking the candle left by his servant, descended into the hall. The man stood close to the door. Mr. T—— approached, and held the light to his face, which he seemed rather anxious to conceal. The countenance which he beheld was appalling: dark and thick mustachios covered the upper lip; the beard long and neglected; the eye sunk, and exhibiting an expression of being long familiarized with crime, and reckless of its consequences. "What do you want with me?" said the clergyman. "I want you to come to a dying man, who wishes to speak with you." "What is his complaint?" "Cholera." Mr. T—— hesitated; and at length said, "I cannot go with you; you do not even tell your name, nor the place to which you would lead me: I would fear to trust my life in your hands." "You need not fear," said the stranger: "what end would it serve to take your life? Come with me, take no money with you, and, on my honour, you are safe." Mr. T—— gave another glance at the man, and the word *honour*, connected with the appearance of such a being, made him smile. "Sit down," said he; "I will go with you." He went again to his chamber, committed himself to the care of his Heavenly Father, prayed for his blessing on the intended visit to the dying man, and felt so strengthened and assured by his communion with Heaven, that he seemed to have lost all fear of accompanying his ferocious-looking guide.

He followed the man through many streets of a large and populous city: it seemed as if they traversed it in the length thereof, so tedious did the way appear. The watchmen were

calling the hour of one, and still they proceeded. At length they came to a street, long and narrow, with houses bespeaking wretchedness, and well known as a quarter of the town remarkable for the vice as well as the poverty of its inhabitants. Mr. T—— followed his guide into a long and dirty entry, which terminated in a square, where he stopped, and took out of his pocket a knife, with which he began to scrape away some earth from the ground. "I can go no further with you," said the clergyman; but, considering he was already as much in the power of the man as he could be in any possible situation, his courage revived, and he watched with intense interest the movements of his strange companion. After some time, he opened a small trap-door, which disclosed a vault of considerable depth, from whence no ray of light proceeded. "Fear not, sir," said the man, as he let himself down by a rope fastened at the inside. Mr. T—— felt at this moment the awful horror of his situation. He might have fled, but he knew the man might soon overtake him; and in the dark he could scarcely find his way back. He therefore determined to see the end of this strange adventure; and, committing himself again to the protection of the Almighty in a short ejaculatory prayer, he watched at the edge of the pit until he saw a light glimmer within it; by the faint light of which, as it approached nearer, he saw the man place a ladder firmly, which he ascended a few steps, and entreated the clergyman to descend, assuring him again of his safety. He did descend into this pit of darkness, which reminded him of the descent of the prophet into the den of lions; for at the bottom, stretched upon the ground, in different attitudes, he beheld a number of men, savage and ferocious as beasts of prey, who raising their haggard countenances, stared wildly upon him. Their appearance appalled him. "Have I," thought he, "got into the region where hope never comes, that comes to all?" The vault was large; the candle which the man held scarcely enlightened where they stood, and left the other end in pitchy darkness. The man then led the clergyman to the farthest end, where, in a corner, stretched upon straw, lay a man dying of cholera. Here was a picture of human nature brought to the last extremity of wretchedness, cramped in every limb; his eye sunk and hollow, and his skin exhibiting the black hue attendant on this awful malady when there is scarcely a hope of recovery. Mr. T—— shook in every limb; he had been used to patients in this dreadful malady, but here was one in such a state as he had never before witnessed. "Did you wish to see me?" he

asked the dying man. "I did," he replied in a clear and distinct tone. "Why do you wish to see me?" "Because," said the man, "some short time ago, I wandered into your church, and heard you read what I wish you to read to me again: I want to hear it before I die. Oh! it has never left my mind; night and day it sounded in my ear. I thought I could hide myself from God, but the darkness hideth not from him: he has found me out; he has laid his hand heavily upon me, and soon shall I appear before him covered over with my crimes. And did I not hear you say, sir, that God would slay the wicked—that he would say, Depart from me, ye bloody men? O God! I have sinned against thee: thou art just; there can be no hope for a wretch like me." Every nerve in his body seemed convulsed with agony; and he fixed his eyes eagerly on the clergyman, waiting anxiously to hear again that portion of Scripture which had first convinced him of his sin. "Tell me some verse that will bring it to my memory," said the clergyman. "Oh, it told me," said the dying man, "that God knew my downsitting and mine uprising; that he understood my thoughts; that he compassed my path, and my lying down, and was acquainted with all my ways; that there was not a word on my tongue but God knew it altogether. That if I could climb into heaven, he was there; if I went down to hell, he was there also." The clergyman then knew that it was the 139th Psalm that had carried conviction into this poor sinner's heart; and he prayed that this might be the work of the Holy Spirit. And taking out his Bible, read the 139th Psalm: "O Lord thou hast searched me, and known me," &c.

"Oh! that is it, that is it," said the dying man, in a low voice: "thank God, I have heard it again!" The clergyman then said, "The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

"To save sinners!" said he, "but, oh! not such sinners as I have been." "Yes, such as you," said the clergyman. "Hear what comfortable words are here,—'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.' Hear what God says, 'Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'" "How? how?" said the man eagerly; "what must I do to be saved?" "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Your past

sins will not condemn you ; Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." The man stretched out his hands, with upraised eyes, as if imploring mercy : " God be merciful to a poor sinner ! " he faintly uttered, and in that attitude departed.

The clergyman looked around him : the light of the glorious gospel can illumine even this dungeon of darkness and horror, thought he ; on him who lay in darkness and the shadow of death, has this light now shined. The rest of the men had kept at a distance, from the idea that something mysterious must pass between a dying soul and his spiritual instructor, which others were not to hear, " corrupted as their minds are, from the simplicity that is in Christ." But he determined not to depart without a word of exhortation to them ; and coming forward into the midst of them, he spoke to them of the awful state in which they were sunk ; invited them also to come to Jesus, and obtain from him a full and free pardon for all their past offences. " You know not, my fellow sinners," said he, " how soon each of you may be summoned, like that poor man, before the awful bar of God. Cholera is sweeping this city from one end to the other : there is contagion in that corpse : I know not but this may be the last time I may have an opportunity of declaring the gospel to poor perishing sinners. I am a dying man, addressing dying men ; but, oh ! let the love of Christ, who poured out his blood upon the cross to save lost sinners, speak to you, and urge you to quit this pit of destruction—a faint type of that hell to which sin must lead you ; return to habits of honest industry ; nothing but idleness and crime could have brought you into this place." " It is true," said the man who led him there, " it was crime brought us here,—we are a gang of robbers. Our lives, sir, are in your hands ; but, as a minister of religion, I depend on your not betraying us. We could not now get employment—no one would trust us." " Trust in the Lord," said the clergyman ; " hear his words, ' Let him that stole steal no more ; but rather let him labour, working with his hands that which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' Farewell : we may never meet again in this world ; but a time will come when we shall meet ; and, oh ! on that awful day, may I find that this message of mercy has been blessed to all your souls ! " The man conducted the clergyman until he was past the dark narrow street, and could find his way easily to his home, where he returned with sensations of astonishment at the strange and almost romantic scene he had witnessed : it

almost appeared to him like a dream; but he blessed God for sending him as his messenger to declare the gospel to that poor sinner, to bind up his broken heart, and proclaim liberty to this wretched bond-slave of Satan. "Oh!" said he, "is not this a brand plucked out of the fire."—*C. Herald.*

Original Poetry.

SCRIPTURE SONGS.—No. VII.

Where shall the weary soul find rest?

Where shall the weary soul find rest?

Amid gay pleasure's smiling bowers?

Ah! no: the adder hides his crest

Beneath the fairest of their flowers.

In proud ambition's upward path?

Ah! no: it winds along the steep.

Where bursts above the whirlwind's wrath,

Where yawns beneath the raging deep.

Amid the courts of princely pride?

Ah! no: for false-tongued flattery there,

And pale-faced envy by her side,

Pollute with poisonous breath the air.

Beneath the dome of glittering wealth?

Ah! no: for there, in gloom of night,

The daring thief may break by stealth,

And steal away thy soul's delight.

Within the shepherd's lowly cot?

Ah! no: there poverty will come,

With discontent to vex thy lot,

And dark repinings fill thy home.

Oh! where, then, shall the soul seek rest?

Dost thou not hear from heaven above,

In answer to thy prayers address'd,

A voice thus speak in tones of love.—

Oh! come to me—poor child of woe,

By care, and toil, and sin oppress'd,

Oh! come—thy Saviour will bestow,

Upon thy fainting spirit, rest.

G.